

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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Three Steps Forward

THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION has announced the commissioning of a series of five-minute films to be released week by week. These are to go to cinemas free, and the *Cinematograph Exhibitors Association* and *Kinematograph Renters Society* are giving full co-operation. Some of the films have already reached the cinemas and considerations arising from the first batch are to be found elsewhere. This policy of an intimate message week by week to the cinema goers of Great Britain is the most important step in British film propaganda since the beginning of the war. Now that the production of films for short term purposes has been tackled, it is to be hoped that the Ministry will turn its attention to the longer term issues which have so far been let slide and which are of even greater importance. If the democratic purpose of Britain's war aim is to strike home, not only to the people of this

country, but to the people of the free world, the ten months delay since the beginning of the war can only be offset by energetic measures. It is, we believe, of paramount necessity that our propaganda message in all fields shall go further than anti-Hitlerism. To make our own people and other people of the world go to the limit, we must indicate not only what we are against but what we are for. The attitude which says "win the war first and think afterwards" is essentially one of pessimism. It is clear that the need to postulate a good world beyond war is in the minds of the Prime Minister and Messrs. Bevin and Morrison, to mention only three names. We ask that British propaganda shall reflect this outlook, that it shall look into the good things of the future as well as dwelling on the good things of the past which we seek to preserve, that it shall not only illuminate the crudities of Hitlerism but shall put something worth while in their place. In short, our propaganda must be positive.

One Step Back

SINCE THE above note was written, a new addition to the series has appeared which, although a solitary example, is so pointless and tasteless that one wonders whether the standard of the programme is going to remain sufficiently high to make it worth while. *Food for Thought*, with its poor dialogue and cheap jokes, does not even succeed in putting across a message. It only creates a muddle even in the minds of those who, before seeing it, had a working knowledge of nutritional principles. Why did the Films Division pass the script, pass the production, and pass it for distribution? What part did the Ministry of Food play in the making of the film? It marks an all-time low level in cheap propaganda films—and that is saying a good deal. It is vital that the Films Division should maintain a decent level both of film quality and of propaganda. We devoutly hope that this particular production is only a passing bilious attack, and not the first symptom of a chronic disease.

Handing it to Hollywood

THE CHARACTERISTIC *abandon* of the Board of Trade has given the British production industry another blow. Their new Quota regulations, made by an Order in Council, seem to be entirely in the interest of American renting companies. The objectives of the Board of Trade appear to be short term. The new act will secure production in Britain of a limited number of high budget films, which will be shown all over the world. This is good as far as it goes, but it will force the independent British producer into making only cheap second features. For no British producer can gamble on making a high budget film against the selling power of the American renter. Yet in recent months, and despite the war, independent British production has steadily increased in quality, and has produced films that will rank with anything from Hollywood. Now this is to be thrown away, and the field left to the Americans. There is little doubt that this legislation, in a very few months, will have produced a situation comparable to 1918-1927, when the British film industry was completely dominated in every department by American interests. No doubt this action of the Board of Trade is part of a much wider system of financial adjustments between this country and the U.S.A. In fact the film, and all the world good will that that word suggests, is as usual being treated as of secondary importance. One can only hope that, after the war, it will not take another post war decade for the Government to realise the value of the screen for the projection of British point of view, and so undo this Order in Council. In an effort to solve these problems, independent voluntary producers, Balcon, Corfield, Smith, Mycroft and others have formed a "council of action", and have shed themselves of the studio and renting interests who clogged their work in the Film Producers' Association. They are making joint and vigorous protests as they feel their type of production is doomed. It is to be hoped that this voice of British film production will be heard in Great George Street.

Union Now

THE TREND OF industrial development in this country is towards co-operative working and the gradual elimination of individual enterprise. This has been hastened by the war and will probably be further accentuated by conditions after the war. There is now an opening towards some form of regulated federation in the film industry. There is one example in the Newsreel Association, and another in the close exchange of views among short and propaganda film makers. The feature producing industry could probably benefit still more from some form of central direction or authority. If it were possible for producers to bring themselves under a federated system of control of all branches of production, they might find the solution of many of their problems. It would give them greater strength as buyers and sellers. It would give them a more detached approach to Government departments and trade unions without the stamp of self-interest. It would give them a more effective method of working in the national interest. Our feeling is that if some step of this kind is not taken within the next few months the confusions of the producers themselves, and the muddle and lack of vision of the Ministry of Information and the Board of Trade may lead to a "statesmanlike" compulsory mobilisation from above of the film industry in the national interest.

Scoop

ON SUNDAY evening, July 14th, the B.B.C. interpolated into its News Bulletin an item which must rank as one of the biggest scoops ever achieved in broadcasting. This was a running commentary by Charles Gardiner on the bombing of a convoy in the channel and the subsequent dog-fight when the British fighters drove off the raiders. For pure excitement nothing like it has ever been heard over the air; and the authenticity of Gardiner's commentary was backed by the rattle of the machine guns, the excited remarks of the locals near the microphone, and the sensational zoom of a Hurricane over the B.B.C. van. Many people must have wondered whether the newsreel companies were also there. They were. The pictorial side was almost as much of a scoop as the broadcast. As far as editing was concerned, those newsreels which stuck to a bald statement were by far the most successful. These gave a far greater impression of actuality than in the cases where the real material was boosted on the cutting bench with stock shots of German bombers and suchlike. It is to be hoped that facilities for this type of shooting will continue to be widely granted. For, apart from its value in the cinemas, it is also a permanent asset as regards the factual recording of the war. And a full film record of all aspects of operations is something which should on no account be passed by.

Horsey Keep Your Tail Up

THE TITLE OF the film *Way Back When a Horse was a Nag* has been altered to *Way Back When a Nag was a Horse*. (*Kinematograph Weekly*, 4-7-40.)

IN AUSTRALIA

By JOHN GRIERSON

AUSTRALIA IS ALL of twelve thousand miles away. Its beauty is distant in the fashion of, say, Dod Procter, and its gum trees are all the seven ages of man. Its natives are superbly cockney in vitality and have no trammels of inferiority. They have no inferiority complex to the point of emphasis and consciously accept no living model, especially from England. Even in regard to the things called culture. A few, principally in Melbourne, sit with finger to face drinking in the symphonies, but, on the other hand, the huskies of Broken Hill think all English actors are, *ipso facto*, sissies. It is also a matter of self-respect to tramp on one's neighbour's foot rather than miss it. And to any throat naively bared reach a thousand willing hands. Aesthetics in general have a rough time and discussion is not yet a pursuit of the national genius.

All this, by and large, makes Australia probably the most exciting, human, boisterous and humorous of the Dominions. Someone observes that the birth of this nation like all honest births is a noisy, dirty and bloody business. This describes it. So do the soldiers of the second A.E.F. marching on ceremonial parade in the streets of Sydney. They are tall and handsome in the bright Australian sun and drink the bottles of beer passed in from the crowds at magnificent attention. Something of this definite and individual character comes out in their arts and particularly and significantly in their popular arts. The women of Sydney are smarter than the women of Hollywood, which takes genius. Their window-dressing strikes a higher average than New York or Chicago. It is, in fact, as good as the window-dressing of New Zealand—the Empire's most educated country—is bad. Their exhibition work at the Centennial Exhibition in Wellington is as fine as any anywhere and contains the best and most affectionate exhibit of Melanesian art in a decade. They have a good body of popular verse and songs of their own. They breed witty and vicious cartoonists as America breeds sports writers. Their labour tradition stems with a gay and unindoctrinated promiscuity from the Levellers, the Chartists, the Wobblies, Young Tom Mann and the Clydeside of John McLean. Altogether they haven't much to learn from anyone about being alive in a bright and brilliant common sort of way, with the rights of man safe in their noddles. Australia is the kind of England England was on the day of the Jubilee when the people for a moment crawled out from behind the walls and from under the ceilings into the sunlight to praise the King. They agree with Dostoevsky, though with less cogitation, that living is better than the knowledge of it. They put culture in its place in the sense that they have not yet been deceived and destroyed by it and are so instinctively watchful that they strike down good and bad standards with an equal zest and virility.

Men have grown handsome in this Australian sunlight but not films, which are less important. The American article has

a zingo and shine on it which suits the climate. There is also the deep relationship which comes from being the America of, say, forty years ago, before the deluge and ten million unemployed. They like pictures which go places or—in their earlier age of innocence—seem to. Their theatres are resplendent and in excellent good taste like their window-dressing, even in the smaller towns. This befits the facts that they are uniquely important, as the only genuine heartfelt temples of culture outside the fight-rings, racecourses and beaches. They take their films with such emphasis that they travel a hundred miles from the farm to see them. It took Australia to invent plate glass loges, silenced and with overhead speakers, where babies, bores and other rowdies can watch the screen and bawl their heads off without disturbing the deep concentration of the citizenry without.

The Americans, by controlling supply, control the situation generally, principally Fox. In the past, the opposition, for lack of supply, has made considerable play with British films, and more so than in any other Dominion. Part sentiment, part *faute de mieux*, a movement on behalf of British films has developed from the mixture of business necessity, Imperial hankering and Pacific sensitivity. It also derives from the fact that a campaign for British films was one way of opening up finance for native Australian production. No single factor is the whole of the paradox which makes the most parochial Australian sometimes the most voluble champion of England.

With these qualifications, there is an Imperial school. It has the enormous backing of a national habit of thought. Australia is the most English of the Dominions, in the swiftly narrowing sense that it did actually come from England, which is certainly not true of Canada. It talks still of England as "home" and needs the Navy more than anything. On the other hand, the affection of the home-goer discovers a singular mental reserve when viewing the habitations of his brother Britons between Tilbury and Liverpool Street. And, on the other hand, too, the affection for England is not automatically engaged by the sight of pictured West End successes or other offerings of our not so deeply English film studios. Another weakness of the Imperial film view in Australia, as elsewhere, is in thinking that blood flows out of flags and that Indians, Canadians, Yorkshiremen, Hottentots and Whitehall officials are just one big miasmic British audience and one big abstract British market. The idea has been played with, particularly in Australia, because Australia believes it, or because it hasn't thought about it sufficiently, or because it is the sort of abstraction which sometimes appeals to the abstract philosophers of finance. A troubled scepticism, however, prevents the idea maturing and this, as always, is the other half of the Imperial fact. The One Family idea does not describe either the actuality or the potentiality of the Dominions, as Rudyard Kipling and Walter Creighton discovered some years ago

for even the dumbest to see. The factors are these. Each nation, being young, is proud of its difference. Each is, in fact, different, and within the ordinary terms which every infant learns in his first lessons in human geography. Each, though the little hand rest in the hand of the parent, carries in the little heart a big, big question mark. This sometimes has to do with finance and problems of tribute, but oftener still with a particular advertised *ad nauseam* brand of English culture which it suspects, dislikes and, among the stronger spirits, despises. For these reasons the One Family idea makes no films, nor distributes them much, and Australia, like the others, proceeds on its local steam, which is to say, it indulges in production on its lonesome and from scratch. The point is that the real relationships between the Empire countries are not articulated and the vital bonds which can only concern real people and real things are not maintained. If the philosophy of Empire were renewed and revitalised the films would come and the one big audience would come—and even the one big market would come—but not before. This is now no longer argument, but a conclusion proved.

Australia is better equipped than the other Dominions with film technicians who know American standards and, across the width of the Pacific, have to work things out for themselves. They work necessarily on the limited budget their local market allows, which is around £10,000, though on occasion it has been stretched ambitiously by dreams of One Family and American markets to £30,000 and £40,000. One gains the impression there are more film men in Australia who want to go places than in the other Dominions and the native zest makes them want to go places with an engaging ferocity. At present they are at work on half a dozen feature films, financed at least in part by the New South Wales Government. What will come out of them it is difficult to say. American standards are not easily achieved without the immense creative resources of Hollywood. Present English or Continental standards are not in the Australian heart or mind. If, however, the Australians walk confidently before their own gods, something local and vital will unquestionably emerge and be better for Australia than either. It will, one suspects, be very local at first, as Saturday night sing-songs and music halls are local, with sentiment strong and humour broad; and this also was the background of Burns. Perhaps the taste of metropolitan showmanship will tend to prevent confidence in such deeply native things; or again, as in America, it may discover some of the true things which make

for national pride. Perhaps the relative rarity in the land of critical discussion—so otherwise healthy—will tend to prevent the development of style. Perhaps the national preoccupation with the pleasures of a richly diverting landscape will tend to limit concentration. These are Australia's production problems. As yet one sees no single force which, translating a national purpose into action, makes the film an instrument of its translation. Obviously and consequently, one does not see yet the film reaching out confidently to a national purpose to give itself strength. There are good machines and good men. There is good will. Australia is the most beautiful and picaresque stretch of men and land which the refugees and pioneers of England have invested with their genius. The light may yet kindle and shoot upwards. It may happen casually out of the sprawling vitality and hopefulness of a vast sunlit country as in America. It might, on the other hand, if deliberation in these matters ever comes to Australia, happen less wastefully. The day of such flaming is not yet. The lone individuals who feel that something so obviously astonishing to the blood and muscle as Australia is, ought to be have something done about it, go on dreaming and promoting and hoping and tearing their hearts out rather more than in most places.

Over and behind all this, is the story of individual States, of strong directorates of education, imaginative university extension departments and another outlook on films altogether. That story must be separately set down. It might be as well to emphasise that the One Family idea is no good in that field either. Vital Australia will only take what is vital in England. The devitalised tale we have been telling these ten years has been death to us all over the world and, in the field of this News Letter's interest, no tragedy has been more foreseen and sadder, because more avoidable. The dithering of our distribution service—the fault not of individuals but of unimaginative government—has been in keeping with a country which in these black years has forgotten or ignored or violated the true springs of its inspiration. We had it to say and still have it to say. The only basic thing in Australia or anywhere is the thought that somehow, and in spite of English appearances, there was and is the beating heart of ordinary English people that created England and is its whole significance. Why in the name of England we should allow it to be forever perversely denied, diminished and thwarted, one deeply asks, expecting now—while there is time—the swiftest of answers.

FIVE MINUTES

A discussion of the recently published plans of the Ministry of Information

THE FILMS DIVISION of the Ministry of Information has begun a programme of "five-minute" films. The object is to get a message across to the general cinema-going public every week, and a first list of fourteen subjects has been put into production, of which four or five will have been screened by

the time this article appears. The reason for limiting the running time of these films to roughly five minutes (though some of them run to nearer seven) is largely that exhibitors will have no difficulty in fitting the weekly film into their normal programme. If the films were longer, the exhibitors might well

be faced with the choice between cutting out a paid-for short (booked well ahead) from their programme, or failing to show the Ministry of Information film at all. The good sense of the Films Division is therefore to be applauded, for there was no practical obstacle to the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association agreeing to the plan; and in point of fact the Association appears to have acted with promptitude and enthusiasm, thus giving the lie to certain apologists in the Ministry of Information who claim that the Trade refuses to co-operate.

Of the films so far released about half have concentrated on the human and dramatic element, the rest being based on the "commentary and music" technique. Of the latter pride of place is taken by Priestley's *Britain at Bay*, made by the G.P.O. Film Unit; of the former, the contrasting styles of *A Call to Arms* (Brian Desmond Hurst) and *They Also Serve* (R. I. Grierson) are noteworthy. *A Call to Arms* is frankly theatrical; chorus girls become munition workers, females collapse after twelve-hour shifts, and the climax represents women working what appears to be a sixteen hour shift in order to meet an urgent order for bullets. Here the melodramatic values must be presumed to be more

important than the actual factory facts; but it is difficult to see how one can tell whether the normal audience reaction would be *mépris* at the conditions depicted, or a desire to join the munition workers and thus ease the shifts into more efficient hours. *They Also Serve*, on the other hand, takes the simple story of an ordinary housewife, and makes it dramatic by focussing our attention on the ordinary human kindness which may be found daily in the millions of semi-detached houses of our cities. Here the film stands or falls purely by whether the audience recognises itself, or its relations, with a humorous and warm delight. In both types the morale values and the direct propaganda values intermingle, with morale ahead by half a length.

The most important point about this series is, however, that the Films Division can stick a real feather in its cap if it can establish a good audience reaction to the weekly dose. For, if high quality is maintained, it may be possible to get to the point where audiences miss their weekly M.O.I. film just as much as they would miss their newsreel. The Five Minute Film might thus come to have a permanent and vivifying value in the ordinary cinemas.

ECONOMICS ON THE SCREEN

By PROFESSOR M. POLANYI

THERE ARE obvious limits to the power of the camera to represent the outside world. Take the simple fact that Britain is an island. Photographs can show the British coast and illustrate the seafaring life along its shores; but no amount of photography can represent the simple fact that the country is completely surrounded by sea. This can be stated only in terms of a map which shows the coastline running round the whole of the land. In fact, the statement that "Britain is an island" must be first explained by a symbolic picture, and photography can only be used afterwards to illustrate its contents. And this holds in general: the diagram is used for explaining, the photograph for illustrating outside reality. While the former guides reason, the latter appeals to the senses and to emotion; and only jointly do they reveal the complete human significance of their subject.

How can diagrams and photography join together to make us understand economic life, the way we make our living in society? How can they guide us through this part of reality, so full of the threatening conflicts of our time?

The main fact of economic life is the division of labour. To this we are fatally committed, because hardly any human being could survive in Europe if each had to provide his own shelter, clothing and tools. The degree of specialisation in the present division of labour can be assessed by a glance at a classified telephone directory: there are thousands of different trades, all of which directly or indirectly make their contribution to the needs of the most modest citizen. The citizen himself works in one of these specialised trades and lives

by exchanging the product of his labours with those of thousands of others working in the other trades. He sells his product (or has it sold for him by the firm or institution to which he belongs) and for the money received he buys what he needs: that is the process of exchange. It involves all the customers to whom the things go which the citizen produces, hundreds or thousands of people; and all the suppliers from whom the things come which he uses, again thousands and perhaps millions of people; and since these two groups of persons are not identical, the circle of exchanges must, in fact, be extending even further, including the exchanges between the customers and the suppliers of the citizen.

In this vast circle of exchanges on which the modern standard of life depends, each participant hands on his produce in one direction, say to his neighbour on the left, representing his customers, and receives in the end—as a result of the shifts going all round the circle—the equivalent of his produce from his neighbour on the right, who represents his suppliers. Money is handed round in the opposite direction, and at each step a bargain is struck; so much goods for so much money. Thus, all the things that are exchanged have a price in money attached to them, and each person must try to produce what will sell best. Production is directed to the purpose of monetary gain.

This picture is the *commercial* view of economic life which has in recent years gained wide acceptance even among its Socialist antagonists as the proper way of satisfying the citizens' personal requirements, which form the greater part of his

normal peace-time needs. But the battle for and against Commercialism, which has been raging at full force ever since the opening of the last century, is still the most vital, the most crucial, struggle of humanity. Collectivism, now extending in various forms over the larger part of modern civilisation, uses all its power to reduce the sphere of commerce operating through individual money bargains, in favour of direction by the State, which represents the collective purposes of society and the public view regarding the good of the citizen. Collectivism stands for closer solidarity, Commercialism for more individual independence; every inch of ground is fiercely contested in the struggle of these rival tendencies.

Photography of economic life can show people at work in factories, in mines and on the land; it can show their effort and their skill; their comradeship and good sense. But the photograph does not show whether they are making a profit or a loss, which from the commercial point of view is the main significance of their labours. The circle of gainful bargains in which they form a link cannot be caught by documentary shots, any more than the island nature of Britain can be represented by a sequence of sea views. This inevitable omission naturally produces the impression that the process of manufacture is based not on the consideration of costs and receipts in money, but on some objective criterion of usefulness, implied in the emphasis which the picture lends to the visible outside features of the people at work. In fact, the dramatisation of the human and technical aspects of production which must be the main documentary approach to economic life represents a technocratic view of production which is essentially collectivist. Because, if the nature of economic production is such that its value can be correctly appreciated from outside—without reference to commercial considerations—by the public to which the film appeals, then it ought to be even more certainly assessable by the public authorities, which hence would be fully competent to take its direction in hand and would, in fact, be clearly entitled and obliged to do so.

It is by virtue of this collectivist implication that the documentary style originally arose in the Russian propaganda film which for the first time represented work on farms and in factories with the emphasis of a public triumph. And the same implication persists in the documentaries made in capitalist countries which ring true only if they represent public enterprises where the valuation of products is more or less uncommercial, being largely based on the approval of public opinion—whereas documentaries sound hollow when dramatising private undertakings, because they leave out the balance sheet with the prices and profits (along with the managers and owners) which in reality are the prime movers of the action.

This is the point where the new diagrammatic film representing economic life by motion symbols sets its ambitious task. The film, or rather sequence of films, *Unemployment and Money*, which was reviewed in the June number of this paper, demonstrates how this new approach goes straight at the commercial side of economic life. Its main theme is precisely that grand circle of commercial exchanges, too vast to be seen by any single observer, which guides all individual economic activities in a system of highly divided labour. Just as the island nature of Britain is made visible symbolically

on a map by a closed curve representing its coast line—which no other explanation, no amount of photography or of verbal description can represent with equal clarity—so does the motion symbol of monetary circulation, consisting of a rotating belt of definite width and rate of gyration which is the principal feature of this film, unambiguously establish the concept of this circulation, which no verbal explanation (and certainly no photography) can clearly impart to the popular mind. My experience with adult classes and higher school forms suggests that this symbolic notation is easily absorbed by any person of normal intelligence and can then be used as a firm basis for further pictorial and verbal arguments. The film when demonstrated and explained in its entirety—which requires about three to six lectures—seems to succeed in establishing a new plane, or stage, on which the major phases of business life are visibly enacted, within reach of the understanding and interest of popular audiences.

Unemployment and Money consists of six reels. In the first the symbols are directly intelligible pictures, figures of men and women. The men represents the citizens as producers, the women show the citizens as consumers. From the homes the men move out in one direction along a circle to their jobs at the places of production, while the women go out in the opposite direction, along the same circle, towards the shops. The goods produced by the men start flowing around the circle towards the shops, the money spent by the women goes round to meet it. The second reel transforms the notation into the abstract form of which the gyrating money belt is the most essential feature. The argument which opens in the third reel and goes on with increasing complexity through another three reels, represents the changing tides of monetary circulation which determine the unstable prospects of business life. We see the paradoxical interplay between Thrift and Enterprise which results in alternate phases of depressions with undeserved misery to the workers, and of booms with unjust gains to the employers. We see the mechanism of that exasperating and immoral uncertainty which makes people cry out for collectivist dictatorship.

And yet on this new plane the commercial view of economic life is firmly established against collectivist prejudice. The necessity of conducting economic life by the grand circle of exchanges which is made possible only by the circulation of money is clearly ascertained even while the evils of monetary disturbances are being demonstrated. And there results a determination to check these evils while maintaining and cultivating the essential mechanism of commercial life.

Ultimately, it should be the task of the economic diagram film to give a firm basis to popular economic thought by a visual scheme which explains the commercial mechanism, while the documentary film would illustrate the events arising from this mechanism, and would, moreover, exercise control over the commercial theory by facing it with the results which it bears in practice. Meanwhile, there is a vast amount of work to be done to develop the economic diagram film and its use in teaching and discourse to a level at which it can become really effective; I hope that *Unemployment and Money* may indicate to the careful observer a number of directions in which this work is to be pursued.

WAR BY NEWSREEL

Reprinted from *Film News*, published by *American Film Center*

STORIES by foreign correspondents of American newspapers are trimmed to suit political and military needs, but the journalists have the privilege of seeing a little, asking questions and writing their own stuff. Newsreel correspondents have no such advantages. Foreign cameramen employed by American newsreel companies, having a peculiar war-time value, find themselves in the army and American cameramen find themselves at some distance from the news. Peace news is shot by young boys.

The drafting of American-employed foreign cameramen leaves them for the time being in a dubious position on American pay-rolls, and their films, shot under military orders, have definitely become army or government hand-outs. Should a cameraman of one company obtain independent footage, he must share it with other companies more or less equally. Since all films become official, no matter who does the camera work, competition, when it exists at all, is more in the shipping than the shooting.

Some differences exist between the countries in or near the war. In Germany all film production is under the Propaganda Ministry and no outsiders are taking pictures. Always camera-minded, Germany has given the film a high place in military and propaganda strategy. It is said that Germany has more cameramen in the war than any other country, and certainly there is no shortage of reels favourable to the Nazis shipped from Berlin via Lisbon and Clipper to the United States. Most of this material becomes available to all American newsreel companies, the largest recipient being Fox Movietone which still has a German company, Foxtonendewochenschau. The American company knows little of the situation of its German company; no money has been obtained by Fox from Germany in many a year; and although large quantities of film are received from Foxtonendewochenschau, their source is the Propaganda Ministry. All cameramen are in the German army, and, it is understood, have the same status as regular soldiers, being in fact just that.

German war-newsreels, thematically Nazi, appear as dehumanised, machine-age spectacles, terrific in fireworks, devoid of the realities of mutilation and death. Tanks and aircraft destroy enemy fortifications. No one is hurt. From a distance, a town is gutted by bombs. No one is killed. Blasted, smoking, elegant ruins emerge. The spirit is heroic. The mood is the mystic inevitability of the march of the German machine.

To obtain German Films, American newsreels are required by contract to submit to German restrictions on presentation and commentary. The Nazis, thus, through a long range control

over cutting, editing and titling, prevent their propaganda from being used against them.

Not always, however. An instance of propaganda turning on its maker occurred toward the end of the Polish campaign, resulting in a newsreel scoop. Films of the Westerplatte Battle (the mopping up of Poland) were joyfully shipped out of Germany to the agents of the American companies in Holland, and were relayed on their long roundabout journey to the United States. One agent, previewing the films in Holland, concluded that they were the worst possible propaganda for Germany in America. Chancing the loss of the film altogether, he flew to London and put the German propaganda into the Lion's mouth. The British propaganda minister agreed with him that the German reel was good British propaganda, and passed it. Flown directly to the United States, it gave his company a five-day shipping beat over the other four companies.

To be sure of the effect, the American editor tagged on Polish pictures of the human side of the Nazi spectacle. Most Allied pictures counter German heroics by stressing human appeal, portraying body horrors and refugee misery.

In England some initiative is permitted on non-military subjects. In the war there may be different pictures of the same thing, but all cameramen are given a prescribed subject to shoot. As a result, competitive interest has languished there too. Fox controls British Movietone News; Paramount, British Paramount News. Others are served by Gaumont.

Before the recent German invasions, independent work was done in Holland, Belgium and Norway. Two Paramount men were evacuated from Namsos with the British troops, as was Fox's British Movietone cameraman. All American newsreels have active offices in Stockholm, and several men are roving through the censor-laden Balkans and Italy.

Before the war three American companies had exchange associations with foreign newsreels, and to a limited extent these arrangements still prevail. Paramount and Fox once owned foreign language reels in many countries. Both lost money on the proposition, but found that it helped in coverage costs and in booking American features programmes, including news, in those countries. Most of these reels have folded up.

Not only are no outside cameramen allowed in Russia, but no films on the invasion of Finland have been made available through sale or exchange by Russia on that unpopular enterprise. Newsreel companies regard the absence of Russian government films as remarkable in view of Russia's well-known interest in films

and the noting of cameras among Russians in films from the Finnish front. Paramount once hired a Russian cameraman who was decorated by his government for his work; later he was sent to jail for fifteen years during one of the purges. Russia seems uninterested in the kind of fragmentary propaganda that is possible in newsreels, caring only for feature pictures with the full thesis.

The Clipper neutrally packs German and Allied reels side by side at Lisbon, both sides providing hundreds of thousands of feet. Editors on this end complain of too much expensive and useless footage. Large amounts are said to be either too obviously propagandist or monotonously repetitious. The amount of incoming footage, too, is out of proportion to the one-reel, twice-weekly release of the American companies, making the newsreel relatively the costliest of current films.

All companies hope for better picture. Every British ship, it is reported, carries a 16 mm. camera, and therefore, naval pictures are shot in the smaller size. Blowing them up to 35 mm. results in loss of quality. None of the war film material from any country is technically good. Films are shot with hand cameras, under adverse circumstances, and are duped six or seven times before reaching the exhibitor. The first actual fighting pictures came through in May, best of which were of the naval battle for the control of Norway. Naval and refugee material has been superior to land fighting films. The most spectacular land pictures were those shot early in the war on the conquest of Poland.

March of Time, which is not interested in spot news, has had crews in London and Paris shooting war background. A half-million feet of film have been stored up on the Allied home front, showing industries, war preparations, rehearsals, manoeuvres, etc. Although some of their men were drafted, they are still shooting. The company expects to obtain actual fighting material by purchase. Stories are planned on "France at War" and "England at War," the latter chiefly about the fleet. Two camera crews are in the Far East; one is en route from the Dutch East Indies; another is in Hong Kong.

Despite the limitations in coverage which prevent the newsreel from showing many phases of the war, the films now reaching the American public do perform a useful function in giving a visual sense of war conditions. And although much good spot news is held back by censorship offices, this war is getting unprecedented film coverage. When it is over we shall probably have the opportunity of seeing it in detail on the screen—shot by shot.



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REALIST FILM UNIT LTD

CHILDREN AS FILM CRITICS

A further essay (abridged) on Ekk's *Road to Life* which won a DNL prize in conjunction with the Educational Department of the Burslem Industrial Co-operative Society.

By a girl pupil at Thirley Hough Girls School

IN MY OPINION, by far the most impressive film that I saw during last season was the Russian film *The Road to Life*. Perhaps it was the absolute foreignness of it that struck me.

When the first character study flashed on to the screen I was somewhat dismayed at the ugliness and unrefinedness of the features. There was no attempt to beautify the faces, they were almost too true to life.

I have seen many English and American films with similar backgrounds, characters from the same stage of life, but never have I seen life so fearlessly and truly portrayed.

Even the poorest, the lowest character of an English film is treated so as not to appear distasteful to the audience.

Contrary to this, often during the course of the Russian film many looked away with a shudder, for the children's faces were worn like those of old men, and every face bore traces of hardships endured and a suspicion of life.

Throughout the film there was never a face similar to those as seen on the English screen, every line, fault and expression was shown almost to exaggeration. Evidently make-up is not used as an aid to beauty in Russian films.

Often one laughed during the course of the film, but usually not the clear laugh of enjoyment, for while the unusualness and often the ugliness became somewhat humorous, there was always something to horrify and pain us at the same time. It was remarked that the humour of the film was similar to that of the "Charlie Chaplins". Yes, indeed, many of the humorous parts were the result of awkwardness: perhaps their shoes, too, were odd and ungainly as were their clothes and figures. Whereas the wickedness of the "Chaplin" films can be looked on as mischief, that of the Russian boys was vice, just the craving for the power to cheat, rob and even kill with skill.

The story, enlarged by many horrifying scenes, was really simple. It was another attempt to prove that the way the mind, not the body, is influenced determines the way of life the child will eventually take.

The path of ruin and wickedness was pointed out to us by showing the ruin brought upon a family where hitherto love and happiness had reigned serene. The good wife of the house, while stopping for a kindly word and to buy from a street seller was attacked, robbed and killed by the actions of a street gang.

Unable to find further happiness in life the husband, the father, endeavoured to drown his sorrow by drinking, and when in his terrible drunkenness he attempted to take life from his son he finally shattered the last remnants of home life, and sent yet another orphan to the streets.

The son of this "home of the past" joined the boys of the underworld, with whom he slept in cellars, fought, stole and helped to wreck the lives of others.

Authorities, dismayed by the ever increasing number of street bandits, raided the haunts of the underworld, collected the boys together and made preparations to send them to strict national homes.

Then arose the man who shocked such institutions. He looked to find good in these outcasts and determined to find it. Why not trust them, give them money, find them occupations, teach them to look on themselves as ordinary individuals, fellow countrymen?

His project was given trial, the boys astounded by this new treatment obeyed wishes, not commands, almost unquestioningly.

They were taken to a home of their own, there were no concrete attempts made to prevent their escaping. They created their own factories of industry, made their own clothes, boots and furniture. Here in this hive of activity, there was no time for thought of bygone days, and their former habits.

Then came a time, when owing to severe weather conditions, transport became impossible, and the Boys Town factories were scenes of inactivity. It now became evident that the bad life

of former days had not become thoroughly despicable to the boys. It was not a long job for them to destroy the results of much labour, together with many other acts of treachery.

To prevent the recurrence of such a plight, the benefactor proceeded to instruct in the making of a railway.

During the construction of this railway the adult leaders of the old gangs made many attempts to divert the boys' attention to bad habits, among them the vices of drink, cards and women. In spite of all this the railway was finally completed.

One of the reformed boys, in his eagerness to prove the perfection of the workmanship, journeyed along the lines in a small vehicle. During this journey he was treacherously attacked, and after fighting for the prestige of his home and benefactor he was killed. His one wish had been to ride before the first engine of the new town for boys. This wish was realised when his dead body was placed carefully in front of the engine and silently conveyed to the settlement.

If industry, honesty, and even feeling could be introduced into those urchins of Russia, what could be done for so many in so similar a plight? Could not they too be shown *The Road to Life*? Was this the appeal that Russia in her anguish sent out during her time of so great a trial?

FILM OF THE MONTH

CONVOY

Production: A.T.P. Studios. Producer: Michael Balcon. Direction: Pen Tennyson. Distribution: A.B.F.D.

IF LOVE IT IS that makes the world go round we must not expect a change of motive power in war-time; we must not be surprised to find His Majesty's Navy tacking round the eternal triangle in the intervals of duty. In *Convoy*, however, the problem of whether David loved Lucy arouses so little interest and, indeed, leads so inescapably to the conclusion that good sailors prefer ships to women, that one is tempted to the heresy that professional efficiency, heroism and self-sacrifice were sufficient ingredients to give this film its emotional appeal. Perhaps there was no need for the embarrassed passage through the story of a young woman cast for the rôle of a plain nuisance.

However, distributors are superstitious people and prefer the time-worn formulæ. Audiences, with no choice in the matter, will accept the love interest as an inevitable characteristic of celluloid drama. And they will find more than adequate compensation in the less erotic personnel with which Mr. Pen Tennyson has peopled the lower decks of his Navy and the bridges of his mercantile marine. That Mr. Tennyson was sufficiently sensible of the qualities of ordinary people to be able to recreate them on the screen, we already knew. We knew also that he could create an environment and endow it with an atmosphere which surpassed studio conventions

in authenticity. Yet his picture of naval life and ritual aboard ship is more difficult to achieve and more surely accomplished than anything he has yet attempted. Here, in a few short episodes woven into more spectacular excitements, is the rigid social code of the wardroom, the etiquette of the bridge, the single-minded devotion of the captain's steward, a worthy who enjoys the deference of his fellows as one who may choose to reveal the mood and intentions of the Old Man, that remote ruler of the floating community. Here too, in the mess decks, is the inevitable "sea-lawyer", pessimistically elaborating the common grievance before an irreverent and hilarious audience.

The dialogue and humour are up to the minute and genuine British made; the sets, photography and editing are first-rate. The naval battles are the best we have seen on the screen. Then there is Clive Brook who does succeed in convincing us that ships mean more to him than women.

Unfortunately the Germans of the film are conventional automata, punctuating their sadisms with heel-clicking, as if Hitler had been educated exclusively on the less inspired performances of von Stroheim. It is a pity that we do not take advantage in such films as this of the opportunity to represent the Nazis as inhabitants of this planet and therefore eligible to be subjected to human standards of criticism. The public can only be bewildered and depressed by the contemplation of the enemy in the guise of ersatz men of Mars.

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A CAMERAMAN'S ANGLE

By BERNARD KNOWLES, cameraman of *Gaslight*

Reprinted by permission of *The Cine-technician*

JUST OVER TWENTY years ago, I was a staff photographer on an American newspaper, *The Detroit News*. For some time my services were occupied on what was known as "The Ford Beat". This constituted a reporter who kept the editor informed of news in the Ford motor car plants, and a photographer assigned to work with the reporter for a month at a time. After about a week on "The Ford Beat", I received a call to go to the Highland Park Plant and photograph the Efficiency Squad at work. This squad comprised experts in the latest workshop practice, medical men, machinery designers, and a motion picture photographer operating an ultra-rapid camera. With them were a crowd of electricians and a group of what were at that time the new Sperry Sunlight Arcs. Ford contended that the sustained vitality of his workers represented the difference between profit and loss. A tired man not only did sloppy work, but less work. The committee were assembled to photograph in slow motion all the physical movements of the various workers. When finished they proposed to design fresh machinery to reduce lost movement to a minimum and speed up output. One of the bigwigs we talked with said, "We don't mind a man going home tired, but he must not be licked."

If this is true of repetition work in a motor car factory, how much more should it apply to creative talent in film studios?

True enough, we are not doing boring work on a line-assembly conveyor, but that does not invalidate the theory. After two or three weeks of intensive production we *do* send our key technicians home licked and denuded of that previous vitality which only rest and relaxation can recover.

The emotional atmosphere in which we work seems to be a large contributory though unavoidable factor. For the director and the cameraman the psychological conditions of work are terrible. They find no response to their mental state in a physical reaction achieving a desired end, as there is in the making of physical things or in the interpretative arts. A pianist, for example, has from a pair of well-disciplined hands an immediate physical response to a mental command; 90 per cent of his effort is subconscious and automatic. He also has the immediate reward of hearing the result. Nervous tension was raised to accomplish something; the response was immediate, followed by a short period of rest. These short periods of rest are most important in maintaining a sustained effort, as also is the constantly recurring sense of satisfaction. This natural rhythmic sequence is denied us technicians. Tension remains certainly until the rushes are seen next day, by which time we are in the middle of another sequence of the same kind.

The first and sometimes the greatest loss in

motion picture manufacture is the script. I believe script writing to be head and shoulders above all other departments in the making of a good film. It is a most onerous responsibility. No other single person concerned in the process needs to know so much about the potentialities and the limitations of our medium as the scriptwriter. To the director, the art director, the cameraman, the recordist, the props, the script is their map of the countryside and their book of orders. If the map is bad, progress will be slow and defective. Retakes and additional scenes will pop up like mushrooms on a warm night. Was ever a good film made from a bad script or vice versa?

Make no mistake, the ubiquitous "action" side of the page is every bit as important as the dialogue. Yet if dripping water wears away the stone, then it is the reiteration of foolish and unnecessary instructions on that left-hand side that wears a technical crew's nerves to the surface. Do let technical and emotional notes bear some relation to possibility and the limitations of production technique. Never let them exceed the scope of the camera, with its cycloptic eye, and the microphone's single ear. Do not suggest shots the making of which is beyond the range of any commercial lens. Do not order camera movement just because cameras can be moved. Surely the only reason to stay with an artist is because it would be dramatically a crime to leave him.

For the guidance of script writers the following table is offered:—

1 considerable pan shot	= 1½ fixed set-ups in time
1 short track shot	= 2 " " "
1 long track shot	= 3 " " "
1 crane shot	= ½ to 1 day, or anything from 5 to 10 set-ups.

Why? you ask. It's simply a question of permutations. With a fixed set-up, the camera is placed, the lights and microphone set, the artists rehearsed, and with Take Two or Three the shot is okayed. Only the artist can let us down. But the moment the script says "Track", an entirely different kettle of technical fish is encountered. When the camera tracks, it also has to pan, the boom swings, artists have to move, walk and stop on dialogue lines, besides finding their marks. In short, one need not be a genius to calculate the number of things that can go wrong. If only one artist is involved, five people must work with absolute precision to achieve a presentable result, with dire results to the number of takes, footage consumption and time. If two or three artists are involved is it any wonder that the negative report begins to look like a football pool coupon? To say "track" may be an easy way of circumventing the necessity of planning script continuity with greater care, but it's wasteful of money, quality and

50 per cent of the time is not justified by the action. Capra, Lubitsch and other masters of our craft only move the camera when it is dramatically impossible to do otherwise.

Another matter which crops up frequently in scripts, for which it is hard to find adequate reason, is the "backs to the wall" and "fireplace" shot. Avoid these if at all possible—the extra contrivance spent on the script will be more than amply repaid. Any object photographed near a door, window, fireplace or wall, is bound to share focal prominence with the object photographed. But this is not all, for the quantity of light essential to achieve a good negative, projected at the object of interest, is also bound to hit these architectural features, and the cameraman is forced to every manner of trickery to compel the audience's attention to the action and keep it from the surrounding decor. Count how few shots there are in a major American product in which the artists are within microphone-shadow distance of a wall or fireplace.

The ideal relation between the director and photographer is something unique—a sort of tie that binds but not inebriates. Here are two people labouring together in a bond of mutual respect and confidence, not strengthened, incidentally, by the fact that they are perpetually conscious that speed of shooting is the first yardstick by which they are measured in the production office.

It is of little consolation to remember the comforting words of John Ruskin—"beautiful forms and composition are not made by chance—a work of quality must bear a price in proportion to the skill, time and risk attending its invention and manufacture." A humorous thought for the Costing Dept.

It's a terrifying thought, but no unusual feature of production, to find a good ten minutes of the material shot is never seen by the public. According to my system of calculation, ten minutes is probably four days' floor time. Those four days, spread over the material which the public will actually see, would certainly enhance its value. Four days at an overhead of say, £1,000 a day, is £4,000. Mr. Simon Rowson tells us that the average price per seat in the domestic market is 1s. If that be true, the cutting-room floor has claimed an audience of 80,000 people. A nice long queue, whichever way you care to look at it.

I'm not suggesting that we make our films 80,000 people cheaper, or we may lose half a million in the process; but we can make a film half a million people better by the judicious use of the resources at our disposal. Think what we could do to improve the finished product if every penny spent went on the screen? Just think!

This thought, by the way, should not be confused with the shooting of extra shots to cover bad time-lapses. We know that such material not provided for in the script is essential. No, the sort of shots I have in mind are the three or four "covering" shots to cut with a complicated track or crane. Either the theory of the moving shot as a whole is correct, or the shooting of the fixed set-ups. They are not both right, and only

one can be used. So when the director retires behind a flat to struggle with the temptation to shoot several coverage shots, it's worth his while remembering that the entire population of a small town at 1s. per head will be debited against the financial success of the film.

The photographer's viewpoint of the art director looks like a problem in advanced perspective. While it would seem that the average photographer is a frustrated art director, it would be a model of understatement to say that art directors have no photographic ideas or ideals at all. They do, however, seem occasionally to labour under the delusion that anything can be photographed, the mediocrity or excellence of the result depending entirely on the skill of the photographer. Jolly flattering, of course—but most cameramen would have it otherwise.

Master carpenters tell me that a concave or convex surface is much more costly to make than a flat one. Well, the camera, seeing only two dimensions, doesn't give a fig for a concave surface (though it is quite partial to a convex one). The well-known circular room ("We've panned all round it, old boy!") is a total loss from the cameraman's point of view. We can only photograph line, and suggest mass with shadows. That is why the equally well-known concave hall, with a gradual spiral staircase, is acceptable because the curved handrail permits the eye to accept an impression of curvature; but the moment one cuts to a close shot of the startled wife saying "Dick! You back already?" the wall becomes flat again, for want of an identifying line.

Photographers are very grateful for the careful provision of numerous angles in modern sets, but could wish for more physical activity in design. The only possible way of suggesting solidity is to cast shadows, as in fact perspective can only be conveyed by light planes. If it is conceivable to retain dignity of design and more shadow casters or relief, so much the better will the sets look. We do, however, beg that the unhappy practice of painting shadows on sets be discontinued. Leave that to the lights—they can do it a great deal better. This has nothing to do with "ageing" a set; that must be done—and by a scenic artist, please. A reasonably sensitive and observant student of physical phenomena is definitely wanted on a job of this sort. Eerie shots in the dark do not mean that the paint work must be equally dark. The photographer has to build a certain silver deposit on the negative before the lab. can make a satisfactory print. And if everything is very dark and the artists' faces are normal, the set will then suffer by sinking into a washy muddy brown.

There is no escape from this problem. With modern stock, the key light for artists is fixed within quite narrow limits, and everything has to accept that level in the characteristic curve as a plimsol line. Relative brightness is a component of lighting, and a set which to the eye is light in tone can be made to accept any position in the tonal scale. But here's the rub—anything below a certain reflection level can never be recovered from the limbo to which it has been consigned by the colour of the paint.

By no means the least person who can increase

or retard speed, and husband or waste the nervous resources of the technical crew, is the assistant director. A curious brotherhood of men, these. Some there are who blow whistles and shout all day long, while others are conspicuous by their quietness and efficiency. From making a studio a sort of home from home, they can easily turn it into a veritable madhouse. Visualise the following: The unit is three weeks deep in that great epic, *Out Of The Frying Pan*—the great love scene between the contortionist trapeze artists is about to be shot. It'll be the first inverted love scene ever made. The director is worried out of his wits because the sound man says the effect of gravity on the vocal chords is to cut out all the high frequencies. The photographer is equally harrassed in an attempt to make the shot attractive. The operator is lying on his stomach with his neck bent back at an angle of 90 degrees and is loudly demanding torture money; the sparks are happy because "double time" is rearing its ugly head—when on walks the assistant director (who has just cancelled suppers) with a loud—"Well, fiddling again? Just look at them fiddling!"

There must be better and more subtle ways of cracking the whip, than those in accepted practice. No one denies the necessity for a "bucker-up", but it is equally undeniable that speed and quality suffer if the process is accomplished at the expense of the technical crew's nerves.

Finally, the photographer himself. "This special breed of men!" Not by any means the most perfect member of a production unit—but one who can plead extenuating circumstances.

If the unit shoots, say, eight set-ups a day, and the average number of lights set is 25, that gives a total of 200 lights per day. For a seven-week production, 8,400 lights. Each of these has to be given its right direction and focussed or flooded to its correct intensity. Diffused, goboed, flagged and generally fiddled about with until each particular light does its job to the satisfaction of the photographer. No mean feat if one remembers that the entire performance is one of visual judgment, and bearing in mind that negative film is entirely devoid of sympathy.

Another point for sympathy is that artists often have pronounced narcissistic tendencies. Every moment they see themselves in the rushes their looks are under their closest scrutiny. From the moment artists lose confidence in the photographer's ability to make them look as beautiful as they think they should, purgatory for this miserable technician would be a veritable paradise. Inquisition of the most searching character is instituted, led by the producer, who pops up from nowhere and demands to know why. But before the poor wretch can open his mouth, he is told in so many words that it doesn't matter what he says, he ought to be clubbed to death.

To conclude, the burdens of production are inherent in the nature of the job, and as far as one can see, it will never be otherwise. But any mutual and sincere attempt to understand the other fellow's problems and point of view can only be for the general good.

NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

✓ **The Story of Michael Flaherty.** *Direction:* John Eldridge. *Camera:* Michael Curtis. *Distribution:* R.K.O.-Radio. 18 minutes.

FOR SOME TIME NOW two young men, Eldridge and Curtis, have been making short films on all kinds of subjects. They have been working outside the various short film organisations and it is perhaps because of this that their films have gone straight into the cinemas unnoticed by the press or by other workers in the same field. Their work, as shown in their film *The Story of Michael Flaherty*, commands attention and respect.

The story is simple. Three hundred years ago Michael Flaherty and his wife, driven from their homes by Cromwell and his men, sought refuge on the wild and rocky coast of Connemara. There they and their fellow refugees built their homes and wrestled with the hostile land of their adoption. It was a hard and ceaseless struggle. The coast was rugged; the ground had to be cleared of stones before the shallow pockets of soil could be built up into ridges deep enough to take the roots of their crops, and it had to be constantly fertilised with seaweed gathered laboriously from the beach. But gradually they managed to settle down and from the half-tamed country wrest a livelihood of sorts.

We see their descendants to-day—the Michael and Sarah of the film with their children, Bridget and Tomashaun, living very much the same sort of life as their ancestors. They now have a cow or perhaps even two, and if they are very lucky they have a small tough-looking horse. It is suggested that the horse represents to the Michaels of Connemara the realisation of a need for something extravagant and grand. Their horizons have widened since the early days.

It is a simple story and it is told in agreeably unpretentious fashion. Michael and Sarah are not represented as Toilers of the Earth, epic against a darkening sky, but as simple pleasant human beings busy with their daily tasks. The director has caught the wild atmosphere of the lonely coast and contrasted it dramatically against the quiet cottage life. He has told his story so effectively in pictures that for once a remote people really lives on the screen.

✓ **S.O.S.** *Direction:* John Eldridge. *Camera:* Michael Curtis. *Music:* William Alwyn. *Distribution:* TIDA. 11 minutes.

MOUSEHOLE will be familiar to most documentary fans by now and to see it and some of its folk once again on the screen is like meeting old friends. Eldridge and Curtis have done a grand job of work here—the former with his crisp direction and grasp of essential dramatics—the latter with some of the best exterior camera-work we have seen for many a day.

The story is simple and straightforward—the constant preparedness of the Mousehole lifeboat crew to deal with every emergency and call for help. With every storm on the Cornish coast

they stand by ready for instant action. A distress signal, a fishing smack in difficulties, and the coxswain rounds up the crew from their homes or their fishing nets. The village streets are alive with running feet as the men race to the lifeboat house to launch their vessel.

When the sea is calm there are still things to do. The regular inspection of the boat. Perhaps a broken propeller blade needs replacement and an urgent call is put through to the National Lifeboat Institution where spares for every part are kept in instant readiness.

It is out of things like these that the stuff of drama is made—not flashy heroics but ordinary every-day human activity whose impact on our own lives and comforts is still too little understood.

✓ **The Big City.** *Production:* Strand Films. *Producer:* Alexander Shaw. *Direction:* Ralph Bond. 12 minutes.

NO SELF-RESPECTING documentary on town or city life can afford to omit the all-important significance to this age of town-planning, or the lack of it. In this film Ralph Bond has used the theme of London's Transport system to specify the varied working- and living-districts of the Metropolis. He has used a minimum of diagram and a maximum of human examples. As a result the film is warm and alive; and the contrast between the actual structure of the transport system and the personal stories of typical Londoners who depend on it (and on whom it depends) take on a significance which is sometimes ironical and sometimes sympathetic. Technically, the film combines commentary and music with some direct sound. The direct sound, as often in such combinations, tends to blow a hole in the commentary sequences; for instance, there is a very finely shot interview with an East End docker, which has such a genuine and compelling actuality that the return to the commentary is something of an anti-climax, and the emphasis tends to get distorted.

It is difficult to know—in view of the severe financial limitations on such films at this time—how this problem can be solved, and it was certainly quite right of Bond to retain at all costs all the direct synchronisation he could. In general, this film may be said to be excellent long-term propaganda for use in Empire and neutral countries. It explains succinctly, humanly, and without any ballyhoo, how the Londoner travels within the area of this huge city both to work and play; and in so doing it gives a good impression of one aspect of our democracy. The camera work is excellent—with a specially notable tube-train sequence—and the film is economically cut.

✓ **Behind the Guns.** *Production:* Merton Park Studios. *Direction:* Montgomery Tully. *Distribution:* free, by Ministry of Information to cinemas. 18 minutes.

THIS FILM is the story of one section of the reserved occupation list—of the soldiers without uniform who keep the Forces armed. It presents us with a broad and sweeping view of the ceaseless work going on in armament factories all over the country. With thoughts of the wasted months still in one's mind it is reassuring to see the great cauldrons of molten steel, the rows of aeroplane fuselages and the innumerable shells.

The film falls into the "Not-to-Wonder-Why" class of propaganda. Nowhere does it pause to analyse or explain, instead it builds up picture and music into a series of hammer blows which do not wait for questioning but relentlessly beat their message into the spectators' skulls. As an example of this extremely useful method of propaganda, *Behind the Guns* is interesting, for successful as it is, it shows that the method will have to be used carefully. Next time it is adopted the dose will have to be increased—there will have to be more noise, bigger and better guns—the film will have to be a super film.

All praise is due to the director, Montgomery Tully, for his exciting shooting of factory and shipyard, and to the cameramen for their dramatic lighting. Particularly impressive were the shots of the making of a big gun—tiny men at work in the great barrel of the gun, focus point of a whirl of shining spirals, crawling on hands and knees, checking and testing.

In this sequence too Francis Chagrin's music was particularly effective. For such a very positive film, the handling of the sound track seemed particularly haphazard and tentative and, except when the music was playing, rather ineffective. But this is a minor criticism.

✓ **America's Youth.** *Production:* March of Time (No. 3, Sixth Year). *Distribution:* R.K.O. Radio. 18 minutes.

FOR RELEASE in August, this issue of the March of Time states some of the problems confronting the twenty-one million young men and women comprising America's youth. Swiftly and in the traditional tempo, it shows us youth on the sporting fields and in the jitterbug contests, youth studying in the eighty per cent co-educational colleges, youth in the café-society atmosphere of glamour boys and glamour girls, youth at work and youth looking for work.

Case histories from the records of the American Youth Commission are used to survey the educational, business and social lives of typical members of all the youth groups—the youth in colleges, in white-collar office jobs, on the farms and in the factories. It is startling to learn that one fourth of the younger generation is deprived of any chance of earning a living. This volume of unemployment is accompanied by a lowering of health standards and a twenty-two per cent increase of crime among city youth in the last ten years of the depression. Perhaps it is this

unemployment, as much as "love of adventure", that accounts for the thousands of young men crossing the border to enlist in the Canadian army and the many more crowding into the armed forces of the United States.

Altogether March of Time has done a pretty good job of reporting, superficial though it may be, and this issue certainly constitutes one of the best in recent months.

The New Britain. Production: Strand Films. Producer: Alexander Shaw. Direction: Ralph Keene. 10 minutes.

YOUR LIKING for this film will largely depend on what you feel about Graham Greene's ingenious commentary, which builds up into a sort of litany the social achievements of Britain since 1918 interpolated with the continuously repeated phrase "We forgot Germany". But, whatever your reaction, there is no doubt that it makes an excellent string on to which to thread the beads of Keene's sensitive shooting. He is one of the few directors who have retained the loving care of composition and *chiaroscuro* which in earlier days was the main preoccupation of documentary directors, and which has often tended to disappear in the hurly-burly of tough social problems and the necessity for argufying. In *New Britain* our recent achievements in all branches of social welfare, our genius in the arts of peace, are revealed without false modesty or overweening pomposity; while the refrain

of "We forgot Germany" acts as a somewhat acid corrective—rather like reading Cato's "Guilty Men" in the middle of a brand-new children's health centre. On the whole, the film should be a tonic to most audiences.

What is Federation? Point of View No. 7. Production: Spectator Short Films. Producer: Ivan Scott. Distribution: Denning Films. 20 minutes

THREE MEN argue out the case for and against Federation. One is impartial, the other two are for and against the idea. As presented by its advocate in this film, Federation is not new, since it consists largely of the simple plea that a world knit together by trade, commerce and communication cannot live unless it finds some means to political unity. An opponent of Federation interposes some objections, largely of the kind that have been put up against any kind of world unity since the Tower of Babel. The impartial chairman, at the end, calls upon Mr. J. B. Priestley who seems to have something to say—and sometimes hasn't—about every conceivable subject nowadays. The balance of the argument gets nearly toppled over towards the end by a powerful attack from the opponent of Federation and never quite recovers, particularly as Priestley's comments are in the nature of a couple of well qualified doubts. Much of the visual material is exciting; so exciting at

times that a split-personality is needed to follow both picture and commentary. One gets the feeling that this is not a movie but an illustrated broadcast.

Fear and Peter Brown. Production: Spectator. Direction: Richard Massingham. Script: Graham Wallace. Photography: W. Luff. Players: Nicholas Hannen, Stephen Haggard and Wendy Weddell. Distribution: Denning Films. 20 minutes.

AS A CHILD Peter Brown was afraid of the dark. His parents laughed or scolded at his fears instead of trying to get him to understand and face his fears. So that when Peter went to school a summons from the headmaster gave him hours of dread. Peter went to the interview well-padded—no sparing of the realism here—but found praise, not punishment, awaiting him. The headmaster notices the boy's fear and tries to reason with it. "Make friends with fear" is the point made by the headmaster, meaning not himself but those fears created by Peter's overwrought imagination. This point is heavily underscored, so much so that the final sequence—war and the new fears it brings—has more the appearance of an event-compelled postscript rather than an application of the argument to present-day conditions. The film does not quite do what it seems to be out to do—to show people that to understand fear is to be half-way on the road to its conquest.

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Workshire Evening Post
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"WORLD WINDOW" EXPEDITIONARY FILMS

By HANS NIETER, who has been responsible for an excellent series of coloured documentary travel films

A *World Window* film only runs for ten minutes—but oh! the work behind those ten minutes!

In planning an expeditionary film it is even more important than in studio work that nothing be forgotten, because out in the wilds of India, or in the nudity of the desert, there is no possibility of making up for omissions. Another very important point is a psychological one, and that is in the choice of assistants and collaborators. I know this to be one of the most essential problems for expeditions, because I have had years of experience. Having to live for months on end in caravanserais and camps in foreign lands, spending working hours and spare time together, makes it imperative that no member of the unit should strike a discordant note, otherwise work and life become pure hell.

Our outfit consisted of one first cameraman, Jack Cardiff, and two other Technicolor operators, a production manager, two chauffeurs who at the same time worked as grips, and myself. We were accompanied by our producer and his wife, and John Hanau, who acted some of the time as production manager and also directed three films.

The camera and lens case were carried in special slings in the lorry to prevent jolting over the mountain roads and desert tracks. We also carried our own planks, since Arabia is a woodless country; and last, but not least, the medicine box which contained everything from castor oil to anti-snake serum.

Permits are generally troublesome things, but having had experience in most European countries we achieved a certain happy knack of utilising the goodwill of one government to get introductions to the next; a kind of snowball system producing such a glut of well-meant introductions that in time we dealt only with the highest officials. My own introduction to highfalutin officials began when I was imprisoned with my outfit in Lithuania, to be liberated with profuse apologies and given all the permits I wanted.

Efficient liaison in the East is tremendously important, and we were fortunate in engaging Gero in Palestine who spoke nearly every European language and Arabic, Persian and Turkish besides.

Some directors I have met out East consider it unnecessary that they should speak native languages. I disagree with them. Being able to say "Please", "Thank you" and "Please don't look into the camera" to natives in their own tongue creates enormous goodwill which no director can do without. The most valuable lesson I learnt was the importance of sincerity—I never directed natives with my tongue in my cheek. I got an enormous thrill out of spending whole nights in discussion with Hindu priests, Yogis, Buddhist monks, Bedouin sheikhs and

others. Sincerity paid. For my film *Temples of India* the Hindu priests arranged a procession of the Goddess Kali and admitted us to the sacred precincts of temples. The Yogis and Brahmins controlled the temper of the masses on the banks of the Ganges while we worked, for this fanatical multitude is easily roused into an ugly mood. Moslem Imams admitted me into the precincts of the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem at the height of the trouble there. Most difficult of all were the Bedouins. Before even suggesting that we had come to film them we had to live in their midst for a fortnight, adapting ourselves to the complicated ritual of their lives. If you don't know the ropes it is difficult enough even to approach a Bedouin camp. For the traveller to gain admission, the morning dew must still be on the ground. To draw near to a camp during the day is to invite a hail of bullets. But their hospitality is unbounded. First comes the ritual of the three cups of coffee—the first against fatigue, the second for pleasure and the third to the sword—that is to say, after having drunk the third cup the guest is expected to fight with his host for the defence of the camp. When a sheep is slaughtered the most honoured guest is handed the eyes. The leader of our expedition, Count Keller, was thus exalted, but being unaccustomed to eating sheep's eyes he would covertly slip them down the front of his shirt. It was not unusual for us to see a pair of horrible staring eyes later dropping out of his trouser legs.

As Moslem religion forbids that the human form should be portrayed, it took me a fortnight

of endless discussion with the Bedouins before I found my solution in the argument that Mahomed only forbade static portrayal, but in a film they would live and move for ever. This argument was accepted to the extent that from that moment we and the camera ceased to exist for them, so that everything we filmed was part of their actual lives.

Some of our most interesting work was done in the jungle in India, stalking wild animals with our camera. Here again we were fortunate in engaging Charles McCann from the Bombay Natural History Museum, who taught us how to handle snakes and overcome our feelings of revulsion. By some strange act of fate he was the only one to get bitten, by a Russell's Viper, and with gusto we opened our medicine chest and pumped him full of serum.

Down in the Karapur jungle we filmed herds of wild elephants and tigers. It was comparatively easy to film tigers. Beaters just drove them into the vicinity of the camera where a bait had been laid. In case they should prefer our cameraman to the dead bullock we all stood round with rifles. The elephants were far more dangerous. We waited for them at the bottom of an unscalable bank by an elephant path at a time when we knew they would go by to drink. One false move, a sneeze, a cough, would have meant a stampede and an early finish to the film.

Expeditionary films are the most terrific fun—sunstroke, thirst, fever, dislocated limbs, bugs, getting lost in the desert, dust, no sleep and more dust, getting the film through H.M. Customs—and then just ten minutes on the screen!

SHORT FILMS NOW IN PRODUCTION

British Films. A film for the Air Ministry; a film on Scotland (British Council); a film on land reclamation (Ministry of Agriculture); a film on the church in war-time.

Ealing Studios. Engaged on a series of shorts including one on the merchant navy and one on coal.

G-B Instructional. A film on the utilisation of raw materials in the war effort; a film on physical fitness; *Empire Round the Atlantic*; a film on the coal industry; *Towards the Stars, Ship-builders, Ports*. The annual programme of *Secrets of Life* films is being completed.

G.P.O. Film Unit. Three films on police, welfare of the workers, and health services.

Inspiration Films Ltd. *Danger Coast of Britain* (documentary on East Anglian coast); *Sport of Princes* (polo); *Sacred and Profane* (a dramatic treatment of the difficult subject of social hygiene for the troops).

Realist Film Unit. Three films on war-time cookery and four on national resources, women in industry, mother and child, and home produced food.

Science Films. This company is engaged on a number of official films under the direction of F. A. Goodliffe.

Shell Film Unit. Films on the air screw, hydraulics, malaria control, reserved occupations, the transfer of skill, the nationalisation of agriculture.

Spectator Short Films. Five films on health services, British response to the German challenge, the Air Force, sea power, and civilians in war-time.

Strand Film Company. Eight films on Scotland's war effort, architecture, the Bren Gun, human effort in supply, the Co-operative Movement, school services in war-time, women teachers, Oxford.

World Window. A film on the medical services.

NOTES FROM OVERSEAS

U.S.A.

Pressure of the persistent advance of the double feature will result in a fresh cut in Hollywood production of shorts for 1940-41, according to a survey eight major producers reported by Variety. Twentieth-Fox is maintaining its schedule of 52 shorts, "but others are reported mulling the matter of a substantial reduction seriously." This will represent a second cut, for the 1939-40 schedule of 617 shorts was a reduction from 658 produced in 1938-39. Cartoons continue to be favoured.

Lights Out in Europe (Herbert Kline), which concerns the pre-war crisis days in London, Poland and France, has been released. Distributors: Mayer and Bernstein. Began at the Little Carnegie Theatre on April 13th. Commentary, James Hilton.

A resolution calling for appointment of a special House Committee to investigate the problem of migratory transients and recommend legislation, proposed by Representative John H. Tolam, Democrat of California, won approval in the House of Representatives late in April. *Grapes of Wrath* was showing in Washington, D.C., at that time, and is reported to have given stimulus to favourable action on this measure which has been pending for more than a year.

Brought together on March 25th by American Film Center, a committee of nutrition experts in an all-day session developed a programme of films on what is best to eat. Three kinds of film are called for:

(1) National: Relation of food to soil; what we can produce; how much and what the public would consume if it could buy freely.

(2) Regional: These call for co-operation with state health departments in the solution of special problems. Where pellagra exists, for example, films will be planned on its prevention and treatment.

(3) Science: Films demonstrating the results of scientific research; on the chemistry and medicine of nutrition, e.g., on vitamins and foods supplying them, on the relation of nutrition to reducing fads.

Four films were used in training the 120,000 census enumerators who rang the U.S. doorbells last month. Films were made by a special Department of Commerce crew with the assistance of a staff member of American Film Center.

Canada

A film about ice hockey, Canadian national sport, shot by Irving Jacoby, is reported as nearly ready for release. Mr Jacoby snow-shoed all over Canada, doing the picture for the Canadian Motion Picture Bureau (similar to the U.S. Film Service). Distribution to be arranged.

Finland

The Finnish Legation in Washington has presented to the International Film Centre for circulation in the States, two films, one on the peaceful life of the co-operatives and the other on the violent opening of the Russo-Finnish war with the bombing of Helsinki. They will soon be scored or titled in English. Information concerning distribution may be secured at the International Film Centre. The I.F.C. also is sending American educational films to Finland, which will be useful in reconstruction. Among those dispatched are films on agricultural problems. The I.F.C. is seeking additional good prints of educational films for that war-torn nation.

Switzerland

Six new Swiss films are to be distributed in North and South America by the International Film Bureau, Inc., of Chicago (59 East Van Buren Street). Among the titles in the series are *Line to Tschierva Hut* produced by John Grierson and directed by A. Cavalcanti for the G.P.O. film unit in conjunction with Pro Telephon, Zurich; *Valleys of Romance*, a story of the people who live along the tributaries of the Rhine from its source in Switzerland to Lake Constance; *Castle in Switzerland*, a documentary relating the historical structure and origin of castles found in Switzerland; *Conge A L'Ecole D'Arosa*, a ski film starring thirty or more boys from ten to fifteen years of age. They will be released in 16 mm. on a rental and sale basis. If interest in the films in 35 mm. develops, they will later be released theatrically. The International Film Bureau is a non-profit corporation, originally set up to distribute non-theatrical foreign films to American high schools and colleges as aids in teaching foreign languages. Out of that grew a distribution service to art theatres in various parts of the country.

DOCUMENTARY BOOKINGS FOR AUGUST

(The following bookings for August are selected from a list covering its members supplied by the News and Specialised Theatres Association.)

Big Game Fishing Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	10th	Natural Wonders of Washington State Tatler Theatre, Manchester	24th
Bringing it Home Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	24th	Non Quassi News Theatre, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	17th
Britannia is a Woman Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	3rd	Old Blue Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	3rd
Cargo for Ardrossan News Theatre, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	24th	Picturesque Udaipur Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	3rd
Devils of the Ocean News Theatre, Oxford Street, Manchester	24th	Point of View No. 7—What is Federation? Tatler Theatre, Manchester	17th
Dundee News Theatre, Leeds	31st	New House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	3rd
Fitness Wins No. 4 News Theatre, Leeds	10th	Ruins of Palmyra Tatler Theatre, Manchester	17th
Fitness Wins No. 5 News Theatre, Leeds	10th	News Theatre, Birmingham	17th
Fitness Wins No. 6 Tatler Theatre, Manchester	31st	Seen in Bangkok News House, Nottingham	24th
Flying Targets News Theatre, Oxford Street, Manchester	17th	Shark Hunting News Theatre, Birmingham	3rd
Forty Million People Tatler Theatre, Manchester	31st	Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	3rd
Giant of Norway Tatler Theatre, Chester	17th	Sheep Dog News Theatre, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	3rd
Gibraltar the First Out-Post New Theatre, Nottingham	3rd	Sport at the Local Tatler Theatre, Manchester	3rd
Know Your Money News Theatre, Leeds	24th	Tatler News Theatre, Birmingham	31st
March of Time No. 1 (Sixth Year) News Cinema, Aberdeen	31st	Squadron 992 Tatler Theatre, Chester	10th
March of Time No. 2 Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	24th	Sword Fishing News Theatre, Bristol	24th
March of Time No. 3 News Theatre, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne	24th	Tell Me if it Hurts News House, Nottingham	10th
March of Time No. 4 Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	24th	Temples of India News Theatre, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	24th
March of Time No. 14 Topical News Cinema, Aberdeen	10th	Tatler News Theatre, Birmingham	24th
March of Time. The Philippines News House, Nottingham	31st	Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	24th
Mechanix Illustrated News House, Nottingham	17th	The Islanders Tatler Theatre, Manchester	31st
News Theatre, Bristol	3rd	News Theatre, Leeds	3rd
News Theatre, Oxford Street, Manchester	3rd	The Eternal Fire News Theatre, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	17th
		The Story that couldn't be Printed Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	17th
		The Democratic Way News Theatre, Leeds	24th
		Under the Water News House, Nottingham	17th
		Valiant Venezuela News Theatre, Bristol	3rd

VERBATIM

This is a word for word reportage of a Scottish father describing an interview with his son's headmaster. It has direct affinities with an aspect of documentary film-making which has if anything been too little explored.

Did I ever tell you about the time I went to see the headmaster of the High School? Oh! I must tell you about that. You see I have a lad who went to that school, and when he was about twelve or thirteen I felt he wasn't just doing too well, so I asked to see his report card. He told me it wouldn't be forward for another fortnight, so I said all right, and the boy went away quite pleased he'd fooled the old man again. However, I asked him again in about a fortnight, and he said, Didn't you get it? But I wasn't to be fooled, and told him he had packed it away somewhere; so sure enough he fished it out and the first thing I saw was—Geography, 7 per cent. Geography, 7 per cent, says I, that's surely not a very good mark, and the boy said, Well, there were others perhaps that had more. Having run away to sea myself at the age of thirteen I knew a little about geography, so I asked him one or two questions, and was informed that Madrid was in India and Madras in South America. So I took the report card along one morning to the High School. The janitor was a pal of mine—many a five bob I'd slipped him at New-year time when I used to run the kids down to the school—and he showed me in to the headmaster's room.

There was the headmaster, what-was-his-name again, a little insignificant-looking runt with a goatee beard—Storman or something. I was to stand just inside the door facing the light while he went on writing and looking at me from time to time over his specs. But I made straight for a chair in front of him and made myself comfortable.

This was the wrong thing to do, for he looked up and said, Yes, so I said, Oh no, just you carry on with your work I can wait, in fact I've the whole day just you carry on. He said, What did you want, but I again assured him I was in no hurry. Evidently he couldn't concentrate on his writing when I was sitting down, though he had no such difficulty when I was standing on one foot after the other inside the door.

So he said, you wished to see me, and I said, Yes, introduced myself and mentioned my boy's Christian name—Alan, but I don't suppose that means anything to you. He said, of course there were many boys in the school, but I came straight to the point and clapped the report card down in front of him, "Geography, 7 per cent," what's the meaning of that?

According to the little squirt the boy couldn't have known much geography to which of course I agreed, but added there must be something else. Was the geography master quite capable or was my boy in the mentally deficient class? Because if the master was all right, I demanded

to know why I hadn't been informed earlier of the discovery of the boy's imbecility. I could easily have afforded to take him away and put him to a school which catered for such children. On the other hand the boy had 97 per cent for maths., so I couldn't just accept the theory that the boy was daft, and was reluctantly forced to the conclusion that there was something wrong with the method of teaching geography. So the little trot hums and haws for a bit and says the method of teaching was the same as in Dr Pinkerton's time, and he had only been a matter of months at the school anyway. So I said I bloody well demanded a little more for the two to three hundred pounds I'd spent than just simply a feeble explanation of that kind, and I put on an act about him blaming a predecessor who was now dead and I wouldn't stand for it.

So with that the little squirt starts getting

nasty and threatening to throw me out, so I said, keep cool, keep cool, or I'll be forced to report anything of an untoward nature to a higher authority; so he calmed down a bit.

Stop me if I've told you about this before.

Anyway I went away after repeating what I thought of his geography master, and got the boy to buy some graph paper and pencils and rubber and a map of the world, and showed him how to plot the distance between New York and Glasgow, Glasgow and Paris, Paris and Berlin, Berlin and Tokyo, and so on, and he got quite interested because it was a method he could understand.

At the next term examination his geography teacher waited till the end of the paper, had a look at it, and what to you think the bastard said—Macdonald you've been cribbing. Hell, cribbing.

DAMAGE TO FILM

DAMAGE TO films has cost one non-theatrical library £80 since last November. Of every 90 films sent out, one has been damaged so badly that it has had to be junked and two have needed reprints of sections of from 50 to 200 feet in length. All the copies should have been good for at least a year's intensive use. The problem of wastage of this kind is unfortunately not a new one, but it seems to be getting worse. Most of the damage could be avoided if teachers would (a) keep their projectors clean, (b) thread up the film carefully, and (c) watch the film on the screen and not leave the projector to run itself. Dust in the "gate" can lay "tramlines" down the whole length of the picture even after it has passed the source of light; the sound track can be ruined. Too small loops will strain the sprockets so that the film cannot be run again. The libraries, in most cases, have to foot the bill (a reel of 16mm. sound film cost £4). This may seriously restrict the supply of educational films if libraries have to set aside for repairs and replacements money which would otherwise have been spent on fresh copies.

ASSOCIATION OF SCIENTIFIC WORKERS

THE ACTIVITIES of this group have been continued throughout the summer. Every week members have voluntarily come together to review and assess scientific films and the list of approved films has grown week by week. The work of the association is not confined to the academic job of assessing films; for example, it is actively engaged in promoting scientific film societies throughout the country. Liverpool, Manchester, Oxford, Cambridge, Aberdeen and Glasgow have already arranged shows for the winter. The London Scientific Film Society is getting ready for its third season in London. But, most important of all, the Association of Scientific Workers is about to issue a memorandum on the making of scientific films; this is designed to show what films are needed and to suggest how the scientific film can be harnessed to the nation's war effort. For if we are to win not only a victory over our enemies but a brave new world, a clear understanding of the science which guides our lives will be an essential adjunct of citizenship.

WORLD FILM NEWS

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FILM CENTRE, 34 SOHO SQUARE, W.1

FILM LIBRARIES

Borrowers of films are asked to apply as much in advance as possible, to give alternative booking dates, and to return the films immediately after use. H. A hire charge is made. F. Free distribution. Sd. Sound. St. Silent.

Association of Scientific Workers, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1. Scientific Film Committee. *Graded List of Films*. A list of scientific films from many sources, classified and graded for various types of audience. On request Committee will give advice on programme make-up and choice of films.

Austin Film Library. 24 films of motoring interest, industrial, technical and travel. Available only from the *Educational Films Bureau*, Tring, Herts. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

British Commercial Gas Association, Gas Industry House, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1. Films on social subjects, domestic science, manufacture of gas. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & a few St. F.

British Council Film Department, 25 Savile Row, W.1. *Films of Britain*, 1940. Catalogue for overseas use only but provides useful synopses of 100 sound and silent documentary films.

British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, W.C.1. (a) *National Film Library*. An important collection of documentary and other films. Available only to full members of B.F.I. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H. (b) *Some British and Foreign Documentary and other Short Films*. A general list of films and sources. (c) *Early Films*. Films 1896-1934 still available in Britain.

Coal Utilisation Joint Council, General Buildings, Aldwych, London, W.C.2. Films on production of British coal and miners' welfare. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

Crookes' Laboratories, Gorst Road, Park Royal, N.W.10. *Colloids in Medicine*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

Dartington Hall Film Unit, Totnes, South Devon. Classroom films on regional and economic geography. 16 mm. St. H.

Electrical Development Association, 2 Savoy Hill, Strand, W.C.2. Four films of electrical interest. Further films of direct advertising appeal are available only through members of the Association, 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Educational General Services, 37 Golden Square, W.1. A wide selection of films, particularly of overseas interest. Some prints for sale. 16 mm. & St. H.

Empire Film Library, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Films primarily of Empire interest. With a useful subject index. 16 mm. & a few 35 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Ensign Film Library, 88-89 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Wide selection of all types of films including fiction, comedies, documentaries, films of geography, animal life, industry. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. & a few Sd. H.

Film Centre, 34 Soho Square, W.1. *Mouvements Vibratoires*. A film on simple harmonic motion. French captions. 35 mm. & 16 mm. St. H.

Ford Film Library, Dagenham, Essex. Some 50 films of travel, engineering, scientific and comedy interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Gaumont-British Equipments, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1. Many films on scientific subjects, geography, hygiene, history, language, natural history, sport. Also feature films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

G.P.O. Film Library, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Over 100 films, mostly centred round communications. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Kodak, Ltd., Kingsway, W.C.2. (a) *Kodascope Library*. Instructional, documentary, feature, western, comedy. Strong on early American comedies. 16 mm. & 8 mm. St. H. (A separate *List of Educational Films*, extracted from the above, is also published. A number of films have teaching notes.) (b) *Medical Film Library*. Circulation restricted to members of medical profession. Some colour films. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. H.

March of Time, Dean House, 4 Dean Street, W.1. Selected *March of Time* items, including *Inside Nazi Germany*, *New Schools for Old*, *America Thinks it Over*. 16 mm. Sd. H.

Mathematical Films. Available from B. G. D. Salt, 5 Carlingford Road, Hampstead, N.W.3. Five mathematical films suitable for senior classes. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. St. H.

Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd., Trafford Park, Manchester 17. *Planned Electrification*, a film on the electrification of the winding and surface gear in a coal mine. Available for showing to technical and educational groups. 16 mm. Sd. F.

Pathescope, North Circular Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2. Wide selection of silent films, including cartoons, comedies, drama, documentary, travel, sport. Also good selection of early American and German films. 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Petroleum Films Bureau, 15 Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, W.1. Twenty technical and documentary films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Religious Film Library, 104 High Holborn, W.C.1. Films of religious and temperance appeal, also list of supporting films from other sources. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Scottish Central Film Library, 2 Newton Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow, C.3. A wide selection of teaching films from many sources. Contains some silent Scots films not listed elsewhere. Library available to groups in Scotland only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Sound-Film Services, 10 Park Place, Cardiff. Library of selected films including Massingham's *And So to Work* and Pollard's *Dragon of Wales*, *Rome* and *Sahara* have French commentaries. 16 mm. Sd. H.

Southern Railway, General Manager's Office, Waterloo Station, S.E.1. Seven films (one in colour) including *Building an Electric Coach*, *South African Fruit* (Southampton Docks to Covent Garden), and films on seaside towns. 16 mm. St. F.

Strand Film Company, 5A Upper St. Martin's Lane, W.C.2. Eleven films available for non-theatrical distribution including *Aerial Milestones*, *Chapter and Verse*, *Give the Kids a Break*, and a number of others of Empire and general interest, including 3 silent Airways films. Mostly 35 mm. Sd. A few 16 mm. St. F.

Wallace Heaton, Ltd., 127 New Bond Street, W.1. Three catalogues. Sound 16 mm., silent 16 mm., silent 9.5 mm. Sound catalogue contains number of American feature films, including *Thunder Over Mexico*, and some shorts. Silent 16 mm. catalogue contains first-class list of early American, German and Russian features and shorts, 9.5 catalogue has number of early German films and wide selection of early American and English slapstick comedies. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Workers' Film Association, 145 Wardour Street, W.1. Films of democratic and co-operative interest. Notes and suggestions for complete programmes. Some prints for sale. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

CATALOGUE OF THE MONTH

Ensign Film Library. (*Pleasure Hours*.) 88-89 High Holborn, London W.C.1.

The Ensign "Pleasure Hours" Library is confined to silent 16-mm. films only, and may be discussed from two viewpoints, entertainment and information. In the former category it is very strong in early American and British comedies. No less than five Harry Langdons, sixteen Chaplins, eight Hank Manns, four Lloyd Hamiltons, and twelve Walter Fordes are available. Two of Harold Lloyd's best efforts are also in the list—*Never Weaken* and *Safety Last*. There are also one or two films of very special appeal to the connoisseur. First of these is undoubtedly *What Happened to Jones*, with Reginald Denny, Marion Nixon, and Zasu Pitts. If our memory

serves us, this was one of the finest comedies in that long series where Reginald Denny, Otis Harlan, Arthur Lake, and usually Laura la Plante, appeared. Then there are *Sweeney Todd*, featuring Moore Marriott (no less), *The Battle of the Somme*, *The Battles of Coronel and Falkland*, *The White Hell of Pitz Palu*, and *The Blue Light*. There is also a good selection of early Westerns.

As far as the informational side is concerned, the catalogue presents a less imposing appearance. There are a number of travelogues, a few biologicals, and the usual selection of bird and animal films. These are also listed in a separate library of Educational films, with an additional four sound films, copies of which can be bought outright at reasonable prices.

WHERE YOU CAN SEE STRAND PRODUCTIONS

MERTON PARK STUDIOS LTD.

STRAND FILMS SHOWING BY AUGUST 1940

● This studio began to specialise in industrial and advertising films during the last war. Accepted media for propaganda then, as now, were restricted by shortage of newsprint and hoarding spaces.

● In this war, a new medium, that of radio advertising, has been wiped out, and there are consequently more people than ever with something to say, looking for a place to say it.

● Official and commercial bodies are increasingly aware of the advantages of using films as their mouthpiece.

Merton Park Studios specialise in film propaganda and

THIS IS OUR SECOND WAR

THE STRAND FILM COMPANY

24 UPPER ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.2. Merton Park Studios: 269 KINGSTON ROAD, S.W.13

WHERE YOU CAN SEE STRAND PRODUCTIONS

A SELECTED LIST OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF STRAND FILMS SHOWING IN AUGUST 1940

"WINGS OVER THE EMPIRE"

Birch Lane Cinema, Bradford	Aug. 8th
Cosy Cinema, Middleton-on-Teesdale	Aug. 16th
Capitol Cinema, Sheffield	Aug. 29th
Odeon Cinema, Torquay	Aug. 5th
Picture House, Shildon	Aug. 1st
Crown Cinema, Wortley	Aug. 19th
Cinema, Glenbowie	Aug. 31st

"MEN OF AFRICA"

Monseigneur, Leicester Sq., W.1	Aug. 1st
Monseigneur, Piccadilly, W.1	Aug. 8th
Monseigneur, Charing Cross, W.C.2	Aug. 29th
Monseigneur, Edinburgh	Aug. 29th

"YOUNG ANIMALS"

Savoy Theatre, Cleckheaton	Aug. 12th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Aug. 12th
Dorchester Theatre, Hull	Aug. 19th
Cecil Cinema, Hull	Aug. 19th
Art Theatre, Fleetwood	Aug. 22nd
Scala Theatre, Sheffield	Aug. 26th
Tower Theatre, Goole	Aug. 26th
Savoy Cinema, Hull	Aug. 29th

"THESE CHILDREN ARE SAFE"

Palladium, Beeston	Aug. 12th
Odeon, Torquay	Aug. 26th
Rex Cinema, Salford	Aug. 1st

STRAND FILMS

... FIVE YEARS SEVENTY-EIGHT FILMS COMPLETED
 EIGHT NOW IN PRODUCTION

THE STRAND FILM COMPANY

DONALD TAYLOR, *Managing Director*. ALEXANDER SHAW, *Director of Productions*

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